

HARMONY FIRE DISTRICT

P.O. Box 360 – 194 Putnam Pike
Harmony, R.I. 02829

The regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board was held at the Harmony Fire Station on **Thursday, May 20, 2010.**

Present: Chief Stuart Pearson; Moderator - Raymond Fogarty, Jr.;
Treasurer - Sandra Owens; Tax Collector - Kimberly Barber;
Board Members - Louise Michaels & George Kain
Attorney - Fred Mason, Jr.; Association Representative – John Falco, President

Absent: Clerk - Ann Dahlquist
Board Members - Milton Huston & James Richards (excused)

I. – Meeting Called to Order: 7:15 pm by Moderator Fogarty.

II. - Approval of the minutes from the April 28th meeting.

Moderator Fogarty asked the board if there were any discrepancies to note on the minutes from the April 28th meeting. If not, he would like to call for a motion to accept them.

Louise made a motion to accept the minutes. George seconded the motion. The motion carried.

III. - Treasurer's Report:

Sandy presented her report for the month of **March**. Beginning balance March 1st \$452,332.19 and the ending balance March 31st \$457,998.53.

March was a very routine month. All of the money for the equipment fund was placed into one account and used to pay for the new rescue. We will be down to about \$1,200 in the Equipment Replacement fund by the end of April.

George made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report. Louise seconded it. The motion carried.

IV. - Tax Collector's Report:

Taxes receivable balance is \$94,768.37 as of today's date. Taxes collected in the month of April were \$7,595.97. Third party billing monies collected in the month of April totaled \$1,568.72.

A state mandated full revaluation is under way in Glocester by Certified Revaluation Company. The last revaluation was done in 2007. This revaluation will determine market value of all taxable properties as of December 31, 2010. Notices of the proposed valuations will go out in the 1st quarter of 2011.

The Burrillville Town Council has sent out a letter to all cities and towns requesting support for a resolution they passed on May 12, 2010. This resolution requests the repeal of the Motor Vehicle & Trailer Excise Tax Elimination Act of 1998. Copies were enclosed in everyone's folders for review. This issue is something our board has discussed in the past and it is something that their town has

decided that they would like to resume billing for. This resolution in Burrillville includes their fire districts, so that is why we were included in the correspondence. Kim has discussed the issue with Ange (WGFD) and Patty (CFD) and it is something that they do not feel is feasible for their offices. The process of taxing autos is very involved. Ultimately it is the district board's decision. Some discussion followed about the procedure of taxing autos. George stated that the provision is included in our Charter & By-Laws should we choose to do so. He stated the way he interpreted the law was that the fire districts were actually excluded from the wording and that was issue. It should be there even if we don't opt to tax autos. The Chief stated that the RI Association of Fire Chiefs was also following the issue closely. Kim also said she would continue to monitor updates through the RI Tax Collectors Association (RITCA). The board asked her to e-mail them should any important updates come up. Ray stated that if anything happens a special meeting could be called to discuss the issue.

Sandy asked about the taxes receivable balance. How much will be part of the tax sale? Kim produced the current Trial Balance Report and showed that of the balance, \$18,816.59 was for 2007 and prior and would be included in the next tax sale. Outstanding amounts for 2008 are \$28,601.62 and for 2009 are \$50,373.26.

George made a motion to accept the Tax Collector's report. Louise seconded it. The motion carried.

V. - Chief's Report:

First, the Chief wished Sandy a Happy Birthday!

Next the Chief discussed the FEMA claim for National Disaster expenses during the flood. For the 53 runs we went on we will get 75% of our expenses reimbursed. Apparatus and Equipment expenses totaled \$5,933.84. Personnel expenses, which covered 437 call pay runs and administration costs, totaled \$7,493.72 plus payroll taxes. Additionally, we are submitting claims for the repair costs for 2 dry hydrants within the district.

Sandy asked about the reimbursement timeframe. When would we expect to receive these funds? Kim stated that Chepachet Fire District had already received a check, so turn around should be fairly quick. So discussion followed regarding FEMA.

The EMT-Basic class being held here at the station is complete. We have 6 members of the department that passed the class and are now ready to take the state exam to get their licenses. This will give us more EMT's to ride the rescue, which is something we greatly need.

The annual Glocester Firefighters Banquet was held on May 1st at the Thompson Speedway in Connecticut. It was a success and a great time was had by all. The Chief asked that any board members who were unable to attend please see him after the meeting. Personalized HFD coolers were handed out as gifts the night of the banquet and he wanted to be sure everyone got one.

Crew member Danny Beck had surgery on his back for a ruptured disc. A fruit basket was sent on behalf of the board and his wife Susan called to thank everyone for thinking of him.

Some work was done in the building by Verizon. They came out to work on the phone lines due to a static problem. They found that 2 lines were crossed and we're all set now.

On May 4th an Officers meeting was held. At this meeting a drill schedule for the summer was set.

May 5th the Chief and Mrs. Pearson attended a Retirement Dinner for Gloucester Police Chief Jaime Hainsworth at Wrights Farm Restaurant in Burrillville. Moderator Fogarty & board member George Kain also attended with their spouses. George stated that there was a huge turnout, approximately 750 tickets sold, with ticket proceeds donated to charity.

About a week ago our cleaning company, Janitech, came in to strip and wax the floors in preparation for the upcoming Annual Meeting. All the board members commented on what a good job they do.

Our new propane supplier, Propane Plus, came to transfer the tank and the transfer went very smoothly. We have negotiated a contract with them that should show savings to the district.

Crew members attended the recent Tri-State Firefighters meet in Brooklyn, CT.

Per the board's request at the last meeting, a water cooler has been delivered to the station. It is a rental unit from Poland Springs that will be in use while our water issues are being resolved.

Chief Pearson received a Thank You letter from the Ponaganset High School Guidance Department for his and Private Michael Grenga's participation in the school's Career Day program.

A personal phone call was also received by the Chief from the manager of the Chestnut Oak Group Home. She extended her thanks to him for the department's assistance on a call for one of the group homes residents.

Louise made a motion to accept the Chief's report. George seconded it. The motion carried.

VI. – Harmony Fire Department & Improvement Association Report:

Ray introduced the new President of the Association, Lieutenant John Falco. Congratulations were extended from all of the board members. John thanked the board for their kind words.

John made a proposal to the board for the installation of a patio with a picnic table behind the station by the Association. It would be a place for the crew members to socialize, besides hanging out in front of the station. Some general discussion followed about the idea.

The Chief said the patio would be located in the rear of the building, near the shed. It would be constructed of paver blocks that are easily moved and all work would be done by the crew members.

Ray stated that the usual procedure is for the Association to form a plan, let the Chief know and then come to a meeting and present a plan for the board to vote on. Ray asked if John wanted the board to vote on the project tonight? John said yes.

George suggested that a low fence would need to be added to the project to prevent falling down the hillside. Also a light on a motion detector should be added. The board asked the present the plan to the Chief and for him to supervise the project for safety issues.

Louise made a motion to accept the Associations patio proposal. George seconded it. The motion carried.

VII. - Committee Reports:

a. Rescue Committee – Jim, Chair

Due to Jim's absence the Chief presented this report.

This project is now complete. The new truck has been on the road about 2 weeks and the crew and public are happy. He extended his thanks to the Rescue Committee for all of their hard work on this project: Capt. Randy Brackett, Lt. Donna DeConte, Lt. Kevin Farley & Board Member Jim Richards. The Chief was also a member of the committee.

b. Call Pay Review – George, Chair

George stated that the committee has decided that it would be best to keep the rank and stipend policy that was used last year. They have proposed this to the Association President and he is 100% supportive of the policy. George stated that this policy would stay within the budgeted money for that expense.

Louise made a motion to accept the proposed Call Pay Policy. George seconded the motion. The motion carried.

c. Policies & Procedures Manual – Milton, Chair

Due to Milton's absence the Chief presented this report.
He stated that some progress has been made.

d. Charter & By-Laws Review – George, Chair

The draft copies of proposed changes to the Charter & By-Laws were presented. Copies were inserted in everyone's folders and had also been submitted to all board members electronically.

Attorney Mason has reviewed the proposed changes. Verbiage changes that he advised were made.

In order to give the board time to review the draft copies further, the vote to adopt the By-Laws in their entirety was held off until the next regular monthly meeting, which will be August 19th.

However, the section addressing changes to the Clerk's position must be voted on tonight, due to the upcoming Annual Meeting where the position would be on the ballot. The change to the By-Laws changes this elected position to an appointed one titled Clerk/Secretary. Some discussion followed about the necessity of the Clerk's position.

Louise made a motion to eliminate Article 2 of the old By-Laws which requires the elected position of Clerk to be on the ballot. George seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Louise made a motion to adopt Article 3, Section III of the new By-Laws, which combines the positions of Clerk and Secretary into an appointed position. George seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Some discussion ensued regarding sections in the By-Laws where it states 5 registered voters of the district must be present to form a quorum. It was agreed that all proposed 5's should be changed to 7's within the document.

Letters will need to be sent to our Legislators to have our Charter changes on the docket during their next session.

VIII. - Old Business:

a. Fiscal Year 2011 Budget

Ray asked Sandy if the district's tax rate would remain at \$1.20 per/thousand for the upcoming fiscal year. Sandy stated that according to her calculations, as shown in her Cash Flow Analysis, we should be able to.

Discussion of Adjusted Expenses Line-by-Line:

Executive Committee (60100)

This line item has been reduced to \$1,600, due to being under the last couple of years and due to other line items needing to be increased.

Third Party Billing Fees (60101)

The contract percentage has been reduced from 6% to 5%, so the expense has been reduced from \$5,000 to \$4,250.

Legal (60105)

The board has agreed to give a raise to Attorney Mason making his contract amount \$150 per/month, up from \$100 per/month. Therefore this line item has been increased \$600 to cover the raise.

Audit (60110)

Geoff Malo, our Accountant, has renewed his contract at the same rate.

Insurance (60115)

Our agent always tells us to allow for a 5% increase each year, however the actual expense for last year was lower than our budgeted amount. Therefore Sandy has proposed leaving this line item alone.

Admin. Salary (60200)

Per board discussion this line item will be increased by 3%.

Call Pay (60205)

The figures have been rearranged to reflect the Call Pay Policy implemented.

Chiefs Salary (60210)

This has been increased by the contractual amount.

Fringe Benefits (60223)

Although we did not expend all of the funds in this expense account last year, we still need to keep them available again in the upcoming year in case of unknown grant monies that may be obtained.

Overtime (----- new line item)

\$250.00 line item established. The Chief explained that while dealing with FEMA this past year a need arose to show in our budget where Kim could be compensated in the case of a need for her to perform work above and beyond her usual salaried duties. This proof is needed to submit paper work for reimbursement purposes. Some discussion followed regarding the term "Overtime" and how it was classified within the Administration category.

Radios (60310)

Increased to \$8,000 from \$6,000 due to compliance issues. We need to be Narrow Band Compliant by 2013, so we will replace a couple of radios per year in order to achieve this.

Gear Replacement (----- new line item)

Adding this line item will enable us to replace a couple of sets of turn-out gear yearly.

Training (60320)

Sandy said this item usually comes in low each year, so she has reduced it from \$8,000 to \$7,000.

Vehicle Maintenance (60410)

Sandy asked the Chief if he thought this expense would stay high, even with the purchase of the new rescue, or did he think we could lower it? The Chief said that over the years we have been very fortunate to have always had someone in-house to be able to work on the vehicles. He does not know what will happen in the future. George stated in that case we should definitely leave this expense alone. Some discussion followed.

Electricity (60505)

Decreased from \$8,500 to \$7,500 according to actual usage expenses this year.

Heat (60510)

Decreased from \$14,000 to \$7,500 according to actual usage expenses this year.

Reichert submitted a Heating Oil cap of \$2,699 and an estimate for Diesel of \$3,109.

Capital Improvement Fund

Efficiency Improvements – Capital Plant (61118) \$30,000

Funds will be used to replace the boiler and/or other systems within the building.

*Should this line item fall short of funds, the board can make a motion to take the \$30,000 from the line item of Truck Replacement (60315) to be used to complete the project. The Truck Fund could be replenished from the General Fund, should the board deem it necessary.

Capital Improvement Fund - *Carry Forward from Previous Years*

Personnel – HR Manual (61117) \$2,000

IX. - New Business: Addressed throughout reports.

X. - Public Input: No audience.

XI. – Executive Session:

The Board then announced it would be going into Executive Session regarding a matter of personnel. The individual to be discussed has been notified in writing pursuant to *RIGL 42-46-5*.

The Board recessed for Executive Session at 7:55 pm and the regular meeting reconvened at 8:10 pm.

George made a motion to seal the minutes of the Executive Session. Louise seconded it. The motion carried.

The Moderator asked for a motion to ratify the recommendation of the board concerning the Administrative pay raise items discussed during Executive Session. George made the motion. Louise seconded it. The motion carried.

XII. – Adjournment:

Louise made a motion to adjourn the meeting. George seconded it. The motion carried.

The May meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board was adjourned at **8:50 pm**.

The Harmony Fire District Annual Meeting will be held on **Saturday, June 5th, 2010 at 10:00 am.**
Polls will be open Friday, June 4th, from 5:00 – 8:00 pm and Saturday, June 5th, from 8:00 – 9:45 am.

The next regular monthly meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board
is scheduled for **Thursday, 7:00 pm, August 19, 2010.**

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kimberly S. Barber".

Kimberly S. Barber
Tax Collector/Secretary